

THE  
BRITISH PRESS  
AND THE  
JAPAN-BRITISH  
EXHIBITION OF  
1910



Edited by Hirokichi Mutsu  
with a Preface by Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu  
and an Introduction by William H. Coaldrake

THE  
BRITISH PRESS  
AND THE  
JAPAN-BRITISH  
EXHIBITION OF  
1910

Edited by Hirokichi Mutsu

with a Preface by Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu

and an Introduction by William H. Coaldrake

 Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

This is a facsimile edition of the original four volumes  
*The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition*,  
compiled and edited by Count Hirokichi Mutsu (1869-1942),  
published by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN  
270 Madison Ave, New York NY 10016

Transferred to Digital Printing 2010

Preface © 2001 Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu  
Introduction © 2001 William H. Coaldrake

Project supervised by William H. Coaldrake

Production managed by Tonia Eckfeld

Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies  
The University of Melbourne  
Victoria 3010, Australia.

MMI

ISBN 0-7007-1672-6

**Publisher's Note**

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality  
of this reprint but points out that some  
imperfections in the original may be apparent.

## CONTENTS

### PREFACE by Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu

Some Thoughts on the Japan-British Exhibition.....i

### INTRODUCTION by William H. Coaldrake.....iv

The Mutsu Family and the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition.....v

Model Diplomacy and Modern Japan.....x

Selected Bibliography.....xiii

### THE BRITISH PRESS AND THE JAPAN-BRITISH EXHIBITION

No. 1, March 29, 1909 – May 28, 1910.....1

No. 2, June 3, 1910 – July 25, 1910.....75

No. 3, August 1, 1910 – August 31, 1910.....127

No. 4, September 1, 1910 – December 20, 1910.....157

Index to Nos. 1 – 4.....190

JAPAN AT THE WHITE CITY by Count Hirokichi Mutsu.....197



Figure 1. Count Hirokichi Mutsu. Official portrait as Commissioner of the Imperial Japanese Government to the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910. Source: *Taiyo*, volume 16 number 9, 15 June 1910.

## PREFACE

### Some Thoughts on the Japan-British Exhibition

by

Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu

The aim of the Japan-British Exhibition in 1910 was to spread information about the new Japanese Empire and thereby win friends. It was “PR.” In 1910 – long before today’s Information Age – Japan was little known among the English masses. Mention of Japan called up images of *Madam Butterfly* of the Italian opera and *The Mikado* of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The works of Lafcadio Hearn were not read widely even in England. London was far away from Japan. A month’s travel by sea. No air travel yet.

The United States had much to do with the rise and fall of the new Japanese Empire. America’s “Black Ships,” the steam-powered fleet of Commodore Perry which arrived in Japanese waters in 1852, precipitated a crisis in government which was to bring to an end over 260 years of Tokugawa shogunal rule and the restoration of the emperor. Then a boy of 16, Meiji Tenno became the first Emperor of modern Japan. The imperial court was relocated from Kyoto to Edo, which became the capital of Meiji Japan. The Meiji Constitution reaffirmed the Emperor as the “head of Empire combining in himself the rights of sovereignty.”<sup>1</sup>

After victories in wars with China and Imperial Russia, Japan gained the status of Empire with colonies in Asia. However, the Empire was later lost during the reign of the Emperor Hirohito. The aggression of the armed forces in China for 15 years could not be held back by Hirohito – although, I believe, he wished to do so. The United States this time came with B29s and dealt massive death from the sky – including atomic bombs – to bring Japan to its knees. The Emperor was not dethroned but was given by the victors his new role of “symbol of the state and of the unity of the people” in the post-war constitution.

In the days of the Japanese Empire my grandfather, Count Munemitsu Mutsu, sent his eldest son, Hirokichi, to Cambridge, England, for study. There he fell deeply in love with an English girl, Ethel Passingham, who very many years later became my mother.

Legalization of the marriage in Japan had to wait for a long time, after which mother gained Japanese citizenship and became a countess to boot. She took her new Japanese name of Iso, meaning sea-shore. Soon after the marriage, father was assigned to the Embassy in London. I was born in London in 1907, just three years before the Japan-British Exhibition.

As Charge d’Affaires at the London Embassy, father, with mother’s help, worked assiduously for the success of the Exhibition. My earliest memories that still remain vivid today are of scenes at the Exhibition: people on boats on the pool, paintings of Japanese scenes on the windows of a train, the artificial lake illuminated

---

<sup>1</sup> The Meiji Constitution, 1889, Article 4. David Liu (ed.), *Sources of Japanese History*, vol. 2, published in the United States by McGraw-Hill, 1974, pp. 66-67.

at night, the terrifying sounds of the “Flip-Flap,”<sup>2</sup> and other scenes.

Soon after the Exhibition closed the Mutsu Family of three returned to Japan. It was the Expo’s influence, I believe, that years later made mother write her one and only book *Kamakura Fact and Legend*,<sup>3</sup> on the shrines and temples of the historic town Kamakura, near the sea, where we had our home. The book, published in 1918, is still selling in its fourth edition.

Father quit the foreign service and set up a large foundation for, among other causes, the spread of Western music in Japan, and the education and elevation of the social position of women in Japan. Mother was a skilled violinist and pianist. The girls’ school father established, the Kamakura Jogakuin, is now nearing its one-hundredth year and ranks among the best in Japan.

In 1930 – following my mother’s death – I returned to Japan after some five years in Birmingham, England, where I had studied music and literature. From the following year on my jobs reflected the aims of the Exhibition: News from Japan for overseas reception. When Pearl Harbour occurred, I was serving as Head of the News for Overseas Department of the Domei News Agency. Soon afterwards I resigned and spent the war years at our villa in the mountain resort of Karuizawa far away from the path of the B29s. Years earlier I had been exempted from military duty because of my foreign looks and background. It was, fortunately, a period of disarmament.

Post-war Tokyo was a pile of ruins. My luck held out and I was given a news-writer job at the United Press Bureau in Occupied Japan. For years news stories under my by-line, on the UPI wire, were distributed and read worldwide.

Soon the Information Age dawned. The written page was augmented by instant audio-visual devices in an increasing number of homes worldwide. After serving as manager for the United States Newsreel Pool, in 1952 I incorporated my own company. Its aim was very much the same as that of the London Exhibition of 1910: to get Japan better understood in foreign lands – only this time on a wider, more global scale. International Motion Picture Company, Incorporated, as I write, is almost in its fiftieth year.

To date IMPC has produced or co-produced with overseas TV companies many documentaries on Japanese themes. For a dozen or so years IMPC served as the BBC’s sole agent in Japan for the sale of BBC productions to network TV in Japan. In a curious historical coincidence, the BBC’s great centre in London now stands on the former site of the Japan-British Exhibition.

Many legacies of the Exhibition have lived on. A beautiful oil portrait of a British lady by a Japanese painter is now on display at the Shimane Art Gallery in southern Japan. A Japanese woman university graduate recently earned her MA on the Expo. Another Japanese lady, a resident of London, Ayako Hotta-Lister, has gained her doctorate on the Expo and later published her book: *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*.<sup>4</sup>

Years ago, with a crew from IMPC, I spent a week in Kyoto with the late Sir Kenneth Clark while preparing the Japanese language version of his landmark television series *Civilization*. It was his first visit to Japan. All the same his knowledge about the temples and their art was vast. I asked why and where did he accumulate such knowledge. His answer was: “Whenever that question is asked, my answer is ‘At the Japanese Exhibition in London in 1910.’”

---

<sup>2</sup> The “Flip-Flap” was a scissors-like contraption with mobile steel arms from which observation cages were suspended. Passengers were loaded into the cages and then, with loud clanging sounds from the steam engine that worked the arms, they slowly rose to what seemed to be a tremendous height, then criss-crossed, and eventually were unloaded onto the ground on the opposite side.

<sup>3</sup> Iso Mutsu, *Kamakura Fact and Legend*, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Company. First Tuttle edition, 1995. First published by Tokyo News Service, Ltd., 1918.

<sup>4</sup> Ayako Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East*, Richmond, Meiji Japan Series No. 8, Japan Library, an imprint of Curzon Press Ltd., 1999.

Now the work of the Exhibition is being carried on by Japan-born Australian scholar William H. Coaldrake, Foundation Professor of Japanese at The University of Melbourne. He has been at work trying to bring back to public view – in both England and in Japan – a large model of temple architecture, showing the skills of traditional Japanese carpentry. The model represents the Taitokuin Mausoleum of the Tokugawa shogunate that stood in Shiba Park near the present-day site of Tokyo Tower. It was razed to the ground in one of the B29 raids in 1945. The model occupied pride of place in the City of Tokyo's exhibit in London in 1910.

After its display at the London Expo the beautiful model was presented to the British Royal Family. The large model was later dismantled for safekeeping and now the pieces are in storage with other items in The Royal Collection. Dr. Coaldrake has carefully inspected the parts and is now hoping to restore the temple model to the way it looked nearly a century ago at the Exhibition. I and my friends here in Tokyo cordially wish him good luck.

May the vision of the creators of the 1910 Exhibition come to fruition in the New Millennium.

Ian Mutsu  
Tokyo,  
January, 2001.

## INTRODUCTION

by

William H. Coaldrake

This is a facsimile edition of the book entitled *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition*. It was originally published in London and Tokyo in four parts in 1910 and 1911 by the Imperial Japanese Commission for the Japan-British Exhibition. The newspaper and journal articles were compiled, collated and edited by Count Hirokichi Mutsu (1869-1942), Commissioner of the Imperial Japanese Government to the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910, and a senior diplomat at the Embassy of Japan in London from 1907 until the end of the Exhibition (Figure 1).

The reprinting of these documents, significantly and appropriately, has been sponsored by Count Mutsu's son, Yōnosuke Ian Mutsu, presently resident in Tokyo. He was born in London in 1907 and his earliest childhood memories are of visits to the Exhibition. He is a unique living link between the events of 1910 and our reissuing of the Mutsu documents in book form.

The newspaper articles in this compendium cover the preparations, activities and immediate aftermath of the Exhibition. It is a systematic collection of newspaper and journal articles, starting in March 1909 and ending in December of 1910. The articles are arranged in strict chronological order and were first published in four separate parts.<sup>1</sup> The preface to the first part explains their purpose:

Beyond the expectations of those concerned in the organization of the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, a most gratifying reception has been accorded to the undertaking by the Press in this country...and the signal success which the Exhibition has been enabled to attain is in a large measure due to the cordial and generous support given to the enterprise by the British Press.

In order, therefore, to place on record the high appreciation of the Imperial Commission of the kind sentiments and goodwill thus manifested towards the Japanese nation, some of the thousands of these notices...have been reprinted...(page 2).<sup>2</sup>

Reading between the lines, the Japanese government was so delighted with the press reaction to the Exhibition that it maximised the favourable coverage by reprinting and circulating it for further benefit. This is a standard tactic for any successful public relations campaign.

Nearly a century later, this set of documents assumes great historical significance in its own right. As a corpus of primary sources relating to a single event it goes far beyond the information readily available from newspaper files and

---

<sup>1</sup> No. 1: March 29, 1909 - May 28, 1910; No. 2: June 3, 1910 - July 25, 1910; No. 3: August 1, 1910 - August 31, 1910 (Nos. 1 - 3 published by The Imperial Japanese Commission, London, 1910); No. 4: September 1, 1910 - December 20, 1910 (published by the Imperial Japanese Commission, Tokyo, 1911).

<sup>2</sup> Page references throughout this introduction given in this form, in parentheses and with the word "page" spelt in full, refer specifically to the appropriate page number of this facsimile edition. The abbreviations p./pp. are reserved for citations in other sources.

microfilm. In addition to the mainstream metropolitan dailies such as *The Times*, there are articles from regional newspapers and from a wide variety of popular and specialist journals such as the *Iron and Coal Trade Review*, *Chemical News*, *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, *Advertising World*, *Musical News* and *Hearth and Home*. The depth and range of interest in the Exhibition extended geographically well beyond the Exhibition city of London itself, and to an extraordinary range of newspapers and journals. This is an objective vindication of the claim by the Imperial Commission of a “most gratifying reception” accorded by the Press to the Exhibition.

The four sets of documents have been preserved in bound form in the personal library of Ian Mutsu. In preparing this facsimile edition every effort has been made to retain the character and appearance of the original version.<sup>3</sup> The reprinting of these documents makes widely available a veritable treasure trove of information and insight contained in contemporary newspaper and journal articles about the 1910 Exhibition. It should be of profound interest to students and scholars of Japan and Britain alike. It provides authoritative insights into contemporary attitudes in each country towards the other, revealing trends in politics and diplomacy, trade and industry, society and culture. It allows us to gauge accurately Western reactions to the most concerted and systematic attempt by Japan to explain its traditional society and arts, modern industry and empire, to its most important international ally, Great Britain. As historical documents, this collection brings to life with startling immediacy and rare clarity the people and events of that great collaborative enterprise of Japan and Britain, the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910.

### **The Mutsu Family and the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition**

The Exhibition was held at White City, Shepherd’s Bush in West London from May to October, 1910. It was to prove an event of singular importance in the relationship between Japan and Britain. It marked the first time an Asian nation had participated with Britain at an exhibition on a basis of equality, as seen from posters which represented the British Lion and the Rising Sun of Japan in symbiotic harmony (Figure 2). The Exhibition was the cultural, commercial and political consummation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, signed in 1902 and strengthened in 1905.

The breathtaking sweep of exhibits may be seen from the index furnished with the original four volumes (to be found on pages 190-195 of this edition). These exhibits ranged from arts and industry to agriculture and city plans, from displays of the activities of the Japanese Red Cross to the Department of War, from education and religious beliefs to the role of women, and from national government and local administration to historical tableaux and musical instruments. There was “all the fun of the fair,” including the “Flip-Flap” carnival ride so clearly remembered by Ian Mutsu in his preface. But the Exhibition had serious political and commercial purposes. It was conceived by the Japanese as a direct challenge to prevailing stereotypes of Japan in Britain. Judging from the reactions in the press, for a short time at least, British images of cherry blossoms and inferior civilisation were replaced with deep respect for a venerable civilisation and modern empire. As the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* observed on June 3, 1910:

---

<sup>3</sup> For ease of reading, the page size has been doubled. The density of tone of the print has been enhanced to make it more consistent and legible. In several places the text had to be reconstituted. To facilitate citation, the text has been repaginated consistently from beginning to end. There was separate pagination in the original for each of the four parts because they were published separately. The original index has been retained, as this is an important record of the priorities and concerns of the day. The old page numbers in the index have been deleted because of the repagination in this edition. However the original index may still be used in the present edition because each entry gives the date of publication of each item and the articles are arranged in strict chronological order throughout.

What the man in the street has not realised in recent years, when Europe has been flooded with cheap goods from Japan, is that the Japanese have produced, and are still producing, not merely pretty little “fancy articles,” but some of the finest artistic workmanship that has ever been known. It is forgetfulness of this fact which has led to the disparaging tone in which it has been the fashion of late to talk of certain things as “only Japanese,” as if that fact proved that they were beneath consideration (page 76).

Such a response must have been music to the ears of the Japanese, and it was by no means isolated. As the *Daily News* observed on May 14, 1910:

The British public, we imagine, will not be slow to realize the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition<sup>4</sup> must of necessity produce an effect upon their attitude towards the people of the Far East. The home-keeping Englishman has even yet nothing but a very hazy notion of the yellow man...The lesson in some respects will certainly be salutary. The Japanese workman has many virtues, and there are at this moment in West London a larger number of Japanese artisans than have been seen in this country before. Already their habits have attracted much good-humoured attention. Our people have realized with a touch of dismay that they have a standard of civilization which in some important particulars – in the demand of personal cleanliness, for example – transcends the ordinary equipment of a London lodging-house...We cannot doubt that by the end of the present summer the ordinary Englishman who has been filling up the gaps in his education by spending an occasional afternoon or evening at Shepherd’s Bush will have begun to think in a somewhat different way of our Far Eastern allies (page 58).

The Exhibition clearly created something of a sensation at the popular level. Some 8.35 million visitors flocked through its gates in the six months it was open,<sup>5</sup> a figure which exceeded the attendance even of the 1851 Crystal Palace Great Exhibition in London by more than two million people.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond the statistics and the popular reception, at the official level the Exhibition enjoyed the highest levels of patronage and political support, with visits by royalty, and banquets and speeches by ambassadors, politicians and dignitaries (Figure 3). King Edward VII, we learn from the *Daily News* of May 9, 1910, “lent a suit of Japanese armour from Windsor, formerly in the possession of George III” (page 53). Prince Arthur of Connaught served as Honorary President of the Exhibition, while Prince Sadanaru Fushimi was head of the Japanese Section. Prince Arthur had visited Japan in his youth while Prince Fushimi had, as the *Standard* of November 8, 1909 notes, “headed the mission which was sent by the Emperor of Japan to thank the King for the honour of the Garter” (page 20). The conferral of royal and imperial honours was an integral part of international relations and official visits assumed even more importance in an age when monarchies were more important and travel more difficult. The pomp and circumstance of official functions and speeches would have been everything the Japanese desired, apart from the unfortunate death of the King, Edward VII, just prior to the scheduled opening ceremony (pages 53-54, 63-65). Despite this initial setback, the popular press remained enthusiastic:

---

<sup>4</sup> The official title of the exhibition was “Japan-British Exhibition, 1910” but it is not infrequent to find it referred to as the “Anglo-Japanese Exhibition” in the British Press or even in a speech by Count Mutsu (see page 197). Putting Britain first may have been diplomatic nicety for a predominantly British audience.

<sup>5</sup> *Morning Leader*, November 2, 1910, (page 178); *Daily News*, November 2, 1910, (page 179).

<sup>6</sup> The actual figure was 6,063,986. See *The Illustrated Exhibitor, A Tribute to the World’s Industrial Jubilee; comprising Sketches, by Pen and Pencil, of The Principal Objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, 1851*, London, John Cassell, No. 1, June 7, 1851, p. xli. The figure is even more remarkable when it is recalled that the Crystal Palace Exhibition was a global and not simply a bilateral exhibition.

The Anglo-Japanese Exhibition will be opened quietly at Shepherd's Bush to-day. We trust that the absence of the pomp and ceremony usually witnessed on such occasions, and the gloom which must hang over London this season, may not affect the fortunes of an enterprise deserving of the highest possible success. The Exhibition will stand as an outward and very welcome token of the strong bonds of sympathy, friendship and interest which unite the Island Empires of the East and the West, and which have led to the formation of an alliance [the Anglo-Japanese Alliance] justly regarded as one of the main foundations of the peace of the world... *Morning Post*, May 14, 1910 (page 55).

As this "outward and very welcome token of the strong bonds of sympathy, friendship and interest which unite the Island Empires of the East and the West," the Exhibition was the culmination of Count Mutsu's diplomatic career, a career for which he had been prepared by birth. His father was none other than Munemitsu Mutsu (1844-1897), known generally in Japan as "the father of Japanese diplomacy." He served as Foreign Minister from 1892 until his death in 1897. Munemitsu had succeeded in one of the greatest international challenges of the Meiji State, the revision of the "unequal treaties." For the Japanese these treaties, signed with the Western powers arriving on their shores in force in the 1850s and 1860s, were a symbol of colonial subjugation, forced upon Japan as part of Western colonial expansion into Asia.<sup>7</sup> The revision of these treaties was a unique success for an Asian nation in an imperialist and fundamentally racist world order. It was a success that China was not to achieve until the return of Hong Kong a century later.

Munemitsu also had to deal with the so-called "Triple Intervention" by Russia, France and Germany after Japan's military victory over China in 1895. His account of the Sino-Japanese War and the Triple Intervention, eventually published as *Kenkenryoku* ("Selfless Service to the Sovereign and the State"), became a classic "textbook" for Japanese diplomacy.<sup>8</sup>

His son Hirokichi, inevitably perhaps, headed towards an internationalist career. He began studies in Britain in 1887, reading law at Cambridge in preparation for a diplomatic career. Following postings to Beijing, Rome, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, and succeeding to the title of count upon his father's death in 1897, Hirokichi was appointed First Secretary to the Embassy in London in 1905. He was promoted to Counsellor and became Commissioner for the Japan-British Exhibition in 1909.<sup>9</sup> The *Illustrated London News* of December 4, 1909 notes that "King Edward has made him a Commander of the Victorian Order" (page 21).

We may safely assume Count Mutsu's guiding presence behind publications issued in the name of The Imperial Japanese Commission, but his own voice may be heard directly in the speech he read before the Royal Society of Arts in London on January 19, 1910. This key speech was appended to the four volumes of newspaper and journal articles and may be found on pages 197-212 of this facsimile edition. Delivered three months before the opening of the Exhibition, it sets out the overall objectives and details of the displays. We learn that:

in Japan this Exhibition has been made a national work. To begin with His Majesty the Emperor is greatly interested in its success...the Imperial Diet has voted in its favour a very large grant amounting to 1,800,000 Yen; this together with the prefectural and individual outlays will bring up

---

<sup>7</sup> Perez, Louis G., *Japan Comes of Age: Mutsu Munehiro and the Revision of the Unequal Treaties*, Cranbury, New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated Presses, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Mutsu, Munemitsu, *Kenkenryoku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95*. Edited and Translated with Historical Notes by Gordon Mark Berger, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> See further: Ian Mutsu, "The Mutsu Family," in Nish, Ian (ed.), *Britain and Japan. Biographical Portraits*. vol. II. Japan Library. Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd, 1997, pp. 151-165.

the total expenditure of the nation on account of the Exhibition to an enormous sum (page 199).

Mutsu's speech drew attention to Japan's active participation in the international exhibitions of the preceding half century but he emphasized that the total space taken for the main exhibits at Shepherd's Bush, excluding the area for the extensive Japanese Gardens, was to amount to nearly three times the space which had been used by Japan at the World's Fair at St Louis in 1904 (page 198). He states dramatically that "the forthcoming display will be considerably the most extensive ever attempted by Japan outside her own Empire"(page 198). He also notes that there were many more private organisations, companies and individuals in Japan who wished to contribute but had been excluded because of lack of space (page 204).

We can sense the weight of the exhibition as "a national work" in his attitude towards the "fun of the fair", he dismisses the side shows and other obligatory amusements as "species of attractions" falling outside the control of the British or Japanese authorities, but nevertheless important to the public (page 210). A report of Mutsu's later address to the carpenters brought to London to assemble the traditional buildings for the displays (Figure 4) emphasises the burden of responsibility of the Exhibition. According to the *Daily Express* of April 29, 1910, he informed the carpenters "that it lay with them to see that the Japanese section was ready in good time, and that in this matter the honour of their country was in their hands" (page 48). Hereditary master carpenters in Japan characteristically pursue their vocation with a dedication akin to religious zeal,<sup>10</sup> so it must have been exceptional circumstances indeed which prompted Count Mutsu to feel the need to reinforce their sense of duty. It was, no doubt, with some relief that this duty was duly discharged, the Japanese section earning universal praise from the British Press for its completion on time.<sup>11</sup>

Count Mutsu's speech reveals much about this consummate diplomat. It is a model of diplomacy, engaging yet authoritative. There is the obligatory reference to the English weather (page 200) and an adroit parallel drawn between Japan's defeat of the navy of the Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century and England's sinking of the Spanish Armada in the sixteenth (page 201). He is frank about economic imperatives, describing the severe trade imbalance in favour of Britain:

It would be idle to withhold the fact that it is our earnest desire to enlist in you a greater customer for our products...the volume of our present exports to Great Britain amounts to less than a quarter of your exports to us...(page 211).

Then he neatly turns the argument to appeal to British exporters, stating that "it is essential for [us] to sell, in order to be placed in a position to purchase," and reminds the British that "the principal items of our exports to you – silk, rice, copper, &c. – are articles which do not interfere with your own productions." He directly addresses the problem of "so-called cheap Oriental labour," a frequent complaint by the British side. Mutsu point out that it is "no longer very cheap and is moreover gradually ascending in its cost...but one is apt to forget the fact that, however cheap the labour may be, the gigantic machine which turns out millions of articles in a short space of time is still cheaper."

He highlights various important aspects of the coming Exhibition, from the reconstruction of famous gateways (Figures 5 and 6), to the magnificent Japanese gardens (Figure 7), to displays on Japanese history and exhibits of modern warships

---

<sup>10</sup> See William H. Coaldrake, *The Way of the Carpenter: Tools and Japanese Architecture*, Tokyo and New York, Weatherhill, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> "Perhaps it is the influence of the East, which does things differently. The Japan-British Exhibition on Saturday, the fixed opening day, was actually complete and ready. The exhibits were there, the attractions all bright and attractive, the carpenters and painters away, the rubbish of unpacking out of sight. It is surely a record in public exhibitions, the tradition of which seems to be that opening day should be a display above all things of untidy litter." *Morning Post*, May 16, 1910 (pages 61-62).

and industrial machinery. Of particular interest to Mutsu was the exhibit being prepared by the city of Tokyo. The hub of Japan's government, commerce and industry, the city had been transformed from shogunal headquarters to modern capital in a period of less than forty years. According to Mutsu, the Tokyo exhibit would

include for example a great model of the beautiful temple dedicated to the memory of the second of the Tokugawa Shoguns which still adorns Shiba Park in Tokyo. This model has been specially constructed for this purpose by experts in the Fine Art School of Tokyo<sup>12</sup> and is in itself quite a remarkable work of art (page 205). (Figure 8)

After Mutsu's discussion of trade it is refreshing to see this enthusiasm for culture. This extends to Mutsu's explanation of the Palace of Fine Arts, which he describes as "the most important part of the whole show." Here the extent of national commitment by Japan can be truly gauged, for the Exhibition was to contain a startling number of the finest works of Japanese art from all periods, including many paintings which are today classified in Japan as "national treasures." Mutsu himself wryly points out that "our authorities concerned in the forthcoming Exhibition have been successful in inducing those who are responsible for the safe-keeping of these priceless articles to agree to send them to the White City as a token of special friendship for the British Nation, and on the distinct understanding that we shall never again commit such a sacrilege!"<sup>13</sup> (page 206)

The contribution of Mutsu's English wife, Iso, *née* Ethel Passingham, to the planning and success of the Exhibition cannot be overlooked, although public acknowledgment only comes ninety years later, in her son's preface to the present edition of her husband's publication. Whether it was due to her influence is not clear, but Mutsu, with political correctness well ahead of his time in Japan, explains to his British audience that the contribution of women to Japanese history and society would be an important feature of the Exhibition. He states that, although "there is as yet no movement with regard to the question of suffrage," women have played an indispensable role in Japanese history, that "some of the best specimens of our literature have been the work of the gentler sex," and that in modern Japan they have made important contributions to such philanthropic activities as the work of the Japanese Red Cross (pages 202-204).

Count Mutsu's work for the success of the Exhibition was carried out against a personal background of debilitating illness. It was this poor health which was to bring his diplomatic career to an early end soon after his return to Japan at the end of 1910. He was later to be tempted to come out of diplomatic retirement with the offer of the position of Japanese Ambassador to the United States in 1924, but declined, instead concentrating his energies on philanthropic activities until his death in November 1942.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Now the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku).

<sup>13</sup> Of the extraordinary display of Japanese art at the Exhibition, Lawrence Binyon, that almost legendary expert on the arts of Asia, was to write in the *Saturday Review* (May 28, 1910): "I wonder if the English public appreciates the extraordinary compliment which Japan has paid it? How many English collectors are there who would be willing to send their very choicest Reynoldses and Gainsboroughs and Turners to Japan? Yet Japanese collectors have sent us treasures quite beyond price, the finest examples of their greatest masters of all periods, from the eighth to the nineteenth century..." (pages 73-74.)

<sup>14</sup> See further: Ian Mutsu, "The Mutsu Family," in Nish, Ian (ed.), *Britain and Japan. Biographical Portraits*. vol. II. Japan Library. Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd, 1997, p. 163.

## Model Diplomacy and Modern Japan

The 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London came at a special moment in Japan's international relations, culminating a generation of efforts to guarantee national security and international acceptance. It was conceived by the Japanese as a tool to secure Western acceptance as a global power equal to the West with a sophisticated traditional culture underpinning the rise of modern industry. These aims are clearly stated in Count Mutsu's speech which, as we have already noted, was a model of diplomacy.

The 1910 Exhibition was to be "model diplomacy" in a more literal sense. Count Mutsu, as we have seen, singles out for special mention the architectural model of a shogunal mausoleum prepared by the city of Tokyo. He comments on both its beauty and the extraordinary effort invested in its creation. This model signifies a more general approach to the presentation of national identity by the Japanese in 1910, that is, the systematic use of scale models of buildings ancient and modern to create a balanced image of a self-assured empire with sophisticated traditional culture and advanced modern industries.

Models had previously been an important vehicle for representation and display at the international exhibitions from the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1851. Models of steam engines and factories, wind mills and bridges, cathedrals and coal mines, were a category for competition, with prizes duly awarded for those judged best in technical excellence.<sup>15</sup>

In the age before colour photography, film and television, models were a highly effective way of communicating complex technical details and making ideas tangible to a non-specialist general public. A large model lets children and adults alike see objects three-dimensionally and from a variety of angles, to follow their structural and operational logic, to see how myriad small details of decoration fit into an overall form. Models also take on a life of their own, far beyond mere representation and miniaturisation. They become works of art and technology in their own right, possessing a distinct character quite separate from their role as a surrogate. As Count Mutsu noted about the shogunal mausoleum model, it was "in itself quite a remarkable work of art." Thus, some models communicated at an aesthetic and emotional level, moving and inspiring viewers in the way all great works of art can. This was to be the key to the success of Japan's model diplomacy at the 1910 Exhibition.

The models presented Japan past and present. According to the *Official Report of the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, the municipal exhibits of Tokyo "included a model of the waterworks of that city, showing the source of the supply, aqueducts, settling reservoirs, filter-beds, pumping stations, etc."<sup>16</sup> This in itself was standard exhibition fare, and was matched brick for brick, or rather, sewage pipe for sewage pipe, by the British participants. As *The Times*<sup>17</sup> reported:

The display which the London County Council have arranged to send to the Japan-British Exhibition will occupy an area of 4,000 square feet, and will include models of Battersea Park, cottages on of the Council's housing estates, tenement fittings, Bruce House, showing the cubicles, and

---

<sup>15</sup> In 1851 models were displayed for competition in Class VII ("Building Apparatuses and Models") and in Class XXX ("Sculpture, Models and Plastic Art"). They included windmills, a crane and ships, a representation of Strasburg Cathedral and part of the roof truss of Hereford Cathedral. There was also a large model of the docks and town of Liverpool. *The Illustrated Exhibitor, A Tribute to the World's Industrial Jubilee*, 1851, No. 1, June 7, 1851, especially p. vii, p. 14, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition 1910 at the Great White City, Shepherd's Bush, London*, London and Woking, Surrey, Unwin Brothers, 1911, p. 275.

<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, 6 April 1910. This press account was not included in Count Mutsu's collection, probably because it did not relate specifically to Japan.

the Inebriates' Infirmary...Models will also be shown of Holborn and Kingsway, the Barking sewage scheme, and the underground railways.

The point of departure from existing exhibition practice was with the representation of historical architecture. The Japanese government, through the work of the Imperial Commission and Count Mutsu, created a scientifically precise and superbly crafted set of thirteen scale models of traditional buildings to act as an historical and cultural counterbalance to the representations of modern Japan. The *Official Report of the Exhibition* explains that:

For the first time in the exhibitions in which it has taken part the Japanese Government undertook to illustrate all the different styles of Japanese buildings in a complete set of models. The exhibition at the White City in this department was so complete that the whole history of Japanese architecture was made comprehensive by means of elaborate and faithful reproductions of famous buildings of every description...<sup>18</sup>

This use of a set of models was unprecedented in the history of the exhibitions. Western nations naturally assumed that its audience had direct experience of many of Europe's architectural masterpieces, rendering model making on this scale unnecessary. However, while the Japanese may have initially undertaken to contribute architectural reproductions at the international exhibitions with exotic pavilions and gateways, and caricatured misrepresentations of their traditional buildings,<sup>19</sup> by 1910 they were exhibiting scientifically precise scaled models made with the consummate craft skills for which Japanese art and architecture is famous. As the *Official Report* states:

Not only do such models serve their prime purpose to show the different styles of architecture of Japan, but the workmanship is so excellent that they are all interesting as works of art in themselves...<sup>20</sup>

These models included a selection of the most important works of Japanese architectural heritage, particularly works of Buddhist temple architecture such as the Golden Hall and Inner Gatehouse of Hōryūji, the Karamon or Ceremonial Gateway of Daitokuji, and the Phoenix Hall of Byōdōin.<sup>21</sup>

This selection of buildings represented the contemporary understanding of Japanese architectural history. In the late Meiji period there was a preoccupation with Buddhist temple architecture and little attention was paid to Shinto architecture. This was strengthened by the growing opportunities for fieldwork on Buddhist sites on the Asian mainland, including the cave temples of northern China. Furthermore neither castle architecture, nor palaces of the *shoin-zukuri* type were included. Today this selection would be viewed as unbalanced, but it fairly reflected the cutting edge of architectural knowledge in Japan in 1910.

There was an ecstatic reaction from architectural and craft specialists to these models in the British Press. The *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder* of July 1, 1910, stated that:

---

<sup>18</sup> *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition*, p. 169.

<sup>19</sup> For example, photographs of the Japanese displays at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia show evocative misrepresentations of traditional gateways and tea-houses, no doubt designed to appeal to Western notions of the exotic East but more suited to a Gilbert and Sullivan stage set than a role as a serious representation of traditional Japanese architecture.

<sup>20</sup> *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition*, p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> See: *An Illustrated Catalogue of Japanese Old Fine Arts Displayed at the Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910*. Compiled by the Office of the Imperial Japanese Government Commission to the Japan-British Exhibition, Tokyo, The Shimbi Shoin, 1910, pp. 44-47; Figures 195-211; Nōshōmusho (ed.), *Nichiei hakurankai jimukyoku hōkoku*, Tokyo, Toppan insatsu, 1912, pp. 419-421.

The student of architecture does not, as a rule, give much attention to the architecture of the Far East...The Japan-British Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush affords students of architecture an opportunity of remedying to some extent any deficiencies of which they may be conscious in their knowledge of an interesting phase of architectural history. The series of models exhibited in the Palace of Fine Arts are not only remarkably fine examples of model making, but they show with much greater vividness than any pictures or descriptive writing the characteristic design and construction of the ancient Japanese builders (page 98).

For all their importance, these models were to be surpassed in technical achievement and aesthetic impact by the model of the shogunal mausoleum praised by Count Mutsu in his speech. This was a model of the Taitokuin Mausoleum, built in 1632 in the city of Edo and one of the finest examples of Tokugawa shogunal architecture. In 1909, when the Exhibition was being planned, it was the city's most famous architectural treasure, noted for its architectural flamboyance and the exuberant sculptures of dragons and tigers with which it was decorated. The mausoleum was to be destroyed by the fire-bombing of Tokyo in 1945, leaving the model as the definitive record of the great building.

The model of the mausoleum was well received in London in 1910. As the *Official Report* notes, it was "very highly admired as a work of art, with its tiny bronze tiles covering artistically shaped roofs and with the exquisite work in lacquer with which the whole structure was decorated."<sup>22</sup>

The grainy black and white photographs from the Exhibition show neither the spectacular use of gold and colour, nor the sheer size of the model. It occupied an area equivalent to almost half a tennis court and stood a commanding three metres in height, including its specially prepared stand. Visitors could look up under the eaves at the ornamental sculpture in the same way they would have gazed up at the eaves decoration of the actual building. At a scale of one-tenth of the original building, the model was between two and three times larger than any other in the set of thirteen historical models, and was made not with miniature tools but using full-scale tools and techniques. It was arguably the largest and most fully realized architectural model displayed by any nation in the entire history of the international exhibitions. Stylistically and technically, the Taitokuin Mausoleum model represented everything that the West had come to expect of Japanese decorative arts. This included the same gold and lacquer techniques which had had such an impact on the artistic imagination of Europe when introduced a half century earlier on golden screens and ornamented lacquerware. It may have been conceived as a model, but in its own right it was a veritable *tour de force* of the Japanese architectural and decorative arts.

At the end of the Exhibition the model was "presented to the King by the City of Tokyo" (*Daily Express*, November 4, 1910, page 181). The model eventually was to be disassembled and placed in storage for safe keeping. It has recently been rediscovered in storage in the British Royal Collection. It is to be fully restored and placed on permanent exhibition, allowing the public to experience once more its power and majesty as a work of art and as a symbol of Japanese aspirations in 1910.

The models may be seen as a subliminal assertion by Japan of cultural equality with Britain. In this use of architecture in 1910, the Japanese took control of the construction of their own international identity, rejecting Orientalism and replacing it with accurate models of real buildings from the heart of their civilization. This formalised the equation between traditional culture and modern industry, and even more importantly, between historic architecture and modern empire.

William H. Coaldrake  
The University of Melbourne,  
February, 2001.

---

<sup>22</sup> *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition*, p. 275.

## Selected Bibliography of the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition and the Mutsu Family

There is a copious bibliography on the exhibitions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century but little has been published in either Western languages or Japanese on the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition itself. The most useful starting point in the secondary sources is the book by Dr. Ayako Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East*, Meiji Japan Series No. 8, Japan Library, an imprint of Curzon Press Ltd, 1999. This is the only systematic monograph to date in English on the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition. In addition to extensive analysis, it includes a comprehensive bibliography of the official reports in English and in Japanese, exhibition guides, catalogues and other official documents accompanying the event.

See also: Sato, Tomoko and Watanabe, Toshio (eds.), *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930*, edited and with texts by Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe, with essays by Sir Hugh Cortazzi, Shuji Takashina and Ellen P. Conant; Lund Humphries, London, in association with Barbican Art Gallery and the Setagaya Art Museum, 1991. This beautifully illustrated book accompanied the exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery to celebrate the Japan Festival in Britain in 1991. The essay by Ellen Conant ("Refractions of the Rising Sun: Japan's Participation in International Exhibitions 1862-1910," pp. 79-92) places the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in the context of Japan's role in the international exhibitions in general, using some of the newspaper sources from the earlier edition of the Mutsu compilation. The bibliography contains a comprehensive guide to works in English and Japanese on the exhibitions.

Ian Mutsu's "The Anglo-Japanese Exhibition of 1910," (*The Japan Times Weekly*, September 25, 1971 and October 2, 1971) is a highly readable account of the Exhibition redolent with a sense of the occasion and drawing on the Mutsu newspaper sources.

In Japan a special edition of the journal *Taiyō* was issued to commemorate the Exhibition: "Nichi-ei hakurankai," *Taiyō*. Rinji zōkan, volume 16 number 9 (June 15, 1910).

The following publications relate to the contributions of the Mutsu family over three generations:

Mutsu, Ian, "The Mutsu Family" in Nish, Ian (ed.), *Britain and Japan. Biographical Portraits*, volume II, Japan Library, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd, 1997, pp. 151-165.

Mutsu, Iso, *Kamakura Fact and Legend*, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1995. First published by The Japan Times, 1918.

Mutsu, Munemitsu, *Kenkenryoku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95*. Edited and Translated with Historical Notes by Gordon Mark Berger, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1982.

Mutsu, Yōnosuke (ed.), *Mutsu Munemitsu. Botsugo hyakushūnen kinen kōenshū*, Tokyo, Asahi shinbun shuppan saabisu, 1998.

Perez, Louis G., *Japan Comes of Age: Mutsu Munemitsu and the Revision of the Unequal Treaties*, Cranbury, New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated Presses, 1999.



Figure 2. Poster publicizing the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910.  
Source: *Taiyo*, volume 16 number 9, 15 June 1910

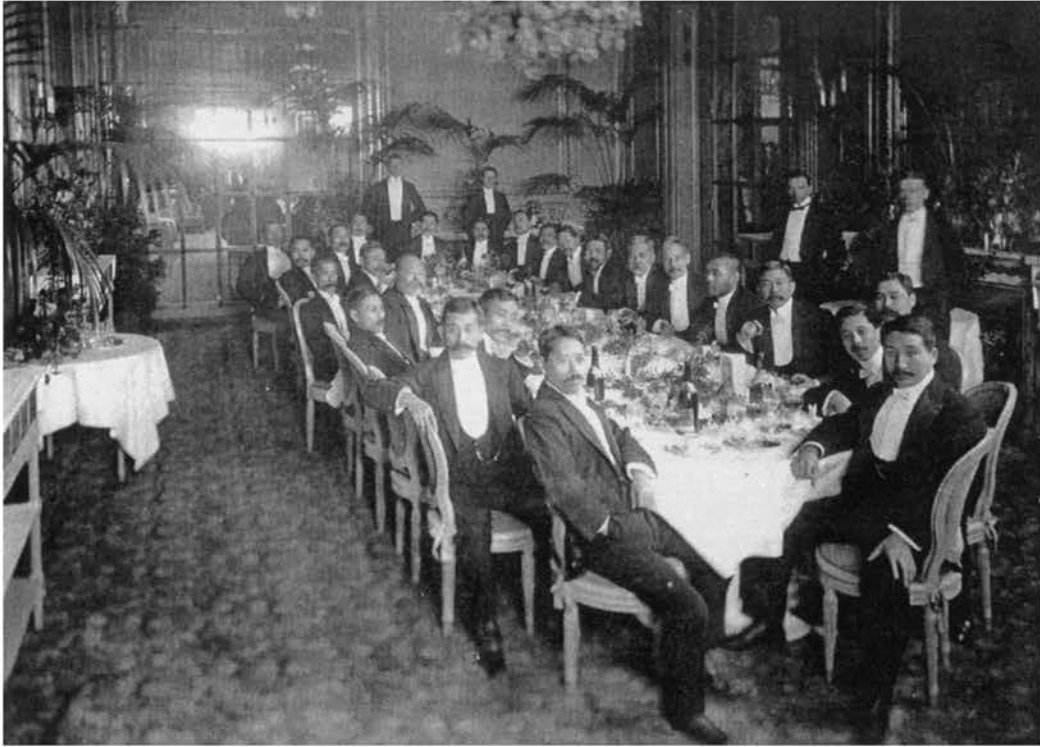


Figure 3. One of the official receptions for the Exhibition.  
Count Mutsu is seated sixth from the front, right side.  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 4. Japanese carpenters at the Exhibition site.  
Source: Private Collection

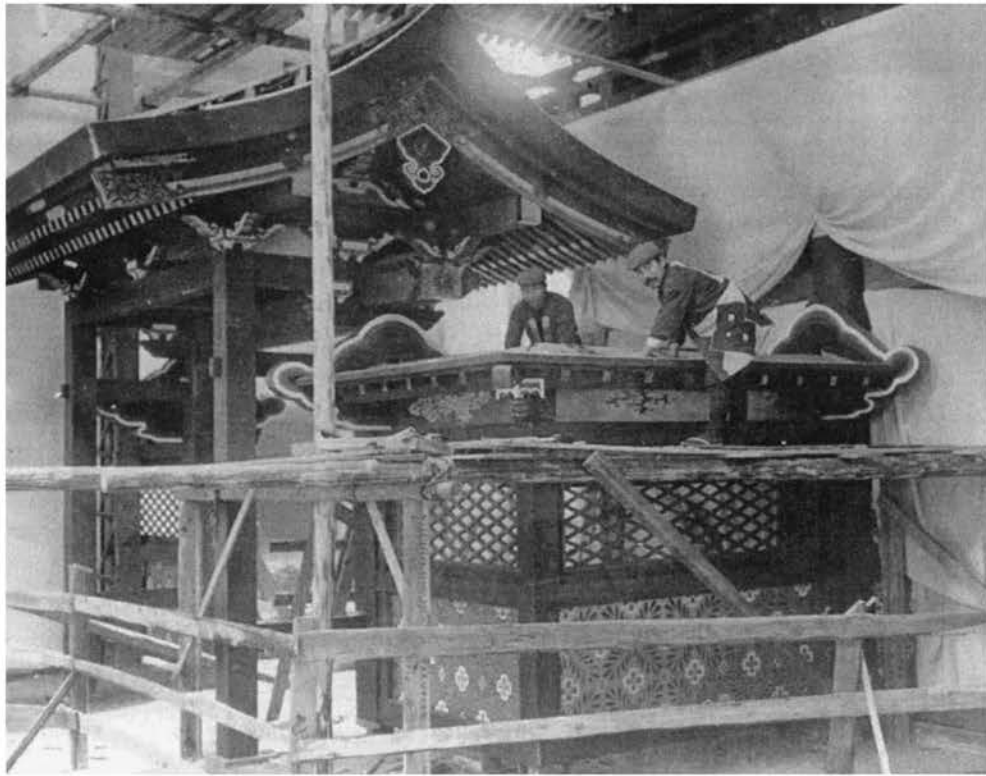


Figure 5. Construction of the replica of the Gateway to the Kasuga Shrine, Nara, at the Exhibition.  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 6. Japanese carpenters using traditional tools and techniques to prepare structural timbers for construction work at the 1910 Exhibition.  
Source: Private Collection



Figure 7. "Garden of Peace" under construction at the Japan-British Exhibition.  
Source: Private Collection

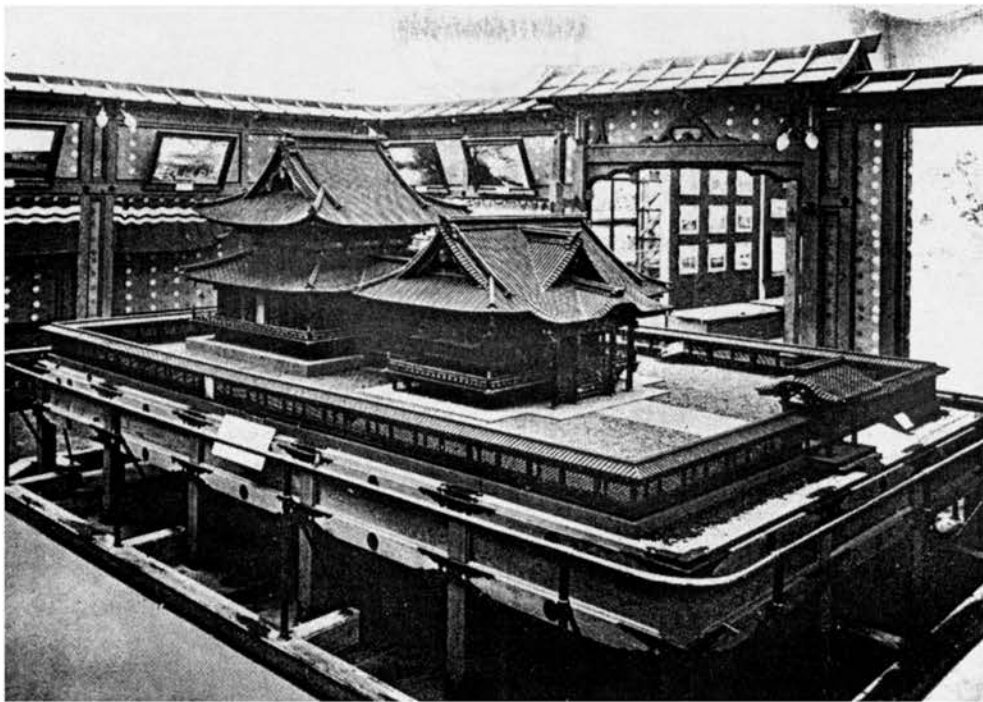


Figure 8. Architectural model of the Taitokuin Mausoleum on display in the Tokyo City Exhibit.  
Source: *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition*

*This page intentionally left blank*

THE  
BRITISH PRESS  
AND THE  
JAPAN-BRITISH  
EXHIBITION



THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE  
COMMISSION

No. 1.

*LONDON, 1910*